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ABSTRACT

A college communication professor discusses methods which will help learning disabled (LD) as well as non-LD students. General techniques advocated include presenting information in a variety of ways, allowing opportunities for questions and clarification, using an organized presentation of information, and being flexible in assignments and evaluation. Questions surrounding the faculty's role in accommodating LD students are discussed. Specific suggestions for teaching a course on interpersonal communication include using tape-recorded materials, peer instruction, study questions, out-of-class projects, and study sessions to prepare for evaluation. Among appendixes are a course syllabus and a description of a role playing activity. (CL)

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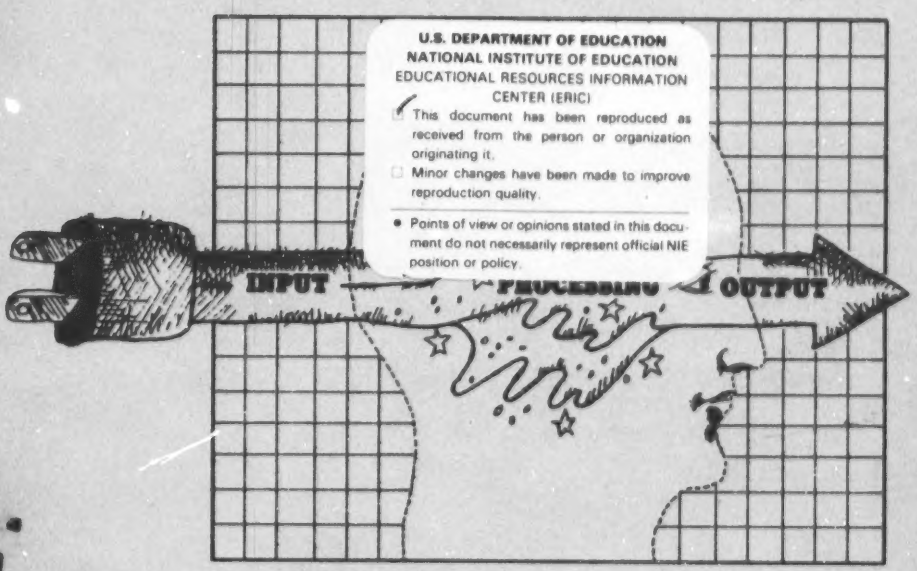
IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS FOR SPEECH COMMUNICATION

by
Roger Garrett



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THE HELDS PROJECT SERIES
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS FOR SPEECH COMMUNICATION

Alternative Techniques for Teaching Speech Communication to Learning Disabled Students in the University

by
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HELDS Project
(Higher Education for
Learning Disabled Students)

Instructional Media Center
Central Washington University
Ellensburg, Washington
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THE HELDS PROJECT AT CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

The acronym HELDS stands for Higher Education for Learning Disabled Students. It represents a model program funded for three years (1980-1983) by the Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education (FIPSE), a division of the Department of Education. This project was funded as a model for other colleges and universities that are preparing to provide equal academic access for the learning disabled students.

Project HELDS had three major focuses. The first was to provide such access for the learning disabled student under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This we did for learning disabled students, most of whom were admitted without modified requirements to Central Washington University. These students were not provided remedial classes. They were enrolled in classes with other college students. The help that we gave was habilitative, rather than remedial, teaching them how to compensate for their weaknesses.

The habilitative training began with identification of those who were learning disabled and included, but was not limited to, such support services as taped textbooks (provided through the services of our Handicapped Student Services Coordinator), readers, writers for tests, extended time for tests, pre-registration with advising to ensure a balanced schedule, the teaching of study skills and tutoring by tutors from the campus-wide tutoring program who were especially trained to tutor learning disabled students.

The second focus of the project was to give a core of twenty faculty teaching classes in the basic and breadth areas a sensitivity to the characteristics of students who were learning disabled so that they could modify their teaching techniques to include the use of more than one modality. This ensured an academic environment conducive to learning for the LD. The faculty members participated in monthly sessions which featured experts in the field of learning disabilities, and in the area of the law (Section 504) that deals with the handicapped student and higher education. There were several sessions in which Central Washington University graduates and currently enrolled LD students shared their viewpoints and experiences with the faculty members. As a result of this some faculty members used the students as resource people in developing curricula for their various disciplines published in this series.

The third focus of the project was to make the university community aware of the characteristics of learning disabilities and of the program at Central. It also sought to encourage other colleges and universities to initiate such programs.

WHAT IS A LEARNING DISABLED STUDENT?

People with learning disabilities have handicaps that are invisible. Their disability is made up of multiple symptoms that have been with them since childhood. Many of them have been described as "dyslexics," but if they are categorized as dyslexic, this will be only one of their many symptoms, as a sore throat is only one of the many symptoms of a cold.

Three concise descriptions of the learning disabled children are provided in Hallahan and Kauffman:

"The National Advisory Committee on Handicapped Children (1968) proposed the following definition, which was adopted by the 91st Congress:

> Children with special disabilities exhibit a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written thinking, talking, reading, writing, spelling, or arithmetic. They include conditions which have been referred to as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, developmental aphasia, etc. They do not include learning problems which are due primarily to visual, hearing, or motor handicaps, to mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or to environmental disadvantage.

Task Force II of a national project (Minimal Brain Dysfunction in Children: Educational, Medical and Health Related Services, Phase Two of a Three-Phase Project, 1969) wrote the following two definitions:

> Children with learning disabilities are those (1) who have educationally significant discrepancies among their sensory-motor, perceptual, cognitive, academic, or related developmental levels which interfere with the performance of educational tasks; (2) who may or may not show demonstrable deviation in central nervous system functioning; and (3) whose disabilities are not secondary to general mental retardation, sensory deprivation or serious emotional disturbance.
>
> Children with learning disabilities are those (1) who manifest an educationally significant discrepancy between estimated academic potential and actual level of academic potential and actual level of academic functioning as related to dysfunctioning in the learning process; (2) who may or may not show

demonstrable deviation in central nervous system functioning; and (3) whose disabilities are not secondary to general mental retardation, cultural, sensory and/or educational deprivation or environmentally produced serious emotional disturbance.[1]

Although the preceding definitions are concerned with children, the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, in their booklet *Learning Disability: Not just a Problem Children Outgrow,* discusses LD adults who have the same symptoms they had as children. The Department of Education (Reference Hallahan & Kauffman) says that two to three percent of the total public school population are identified as learning disabled and that there are over fifteen million unidentified LD adults in the United States, acknowledging, of course, that people with this problem are not restricted to the United States but are found all over the world.

We know that many learning disabled persons have average or above average intelligence and we know that many of these are gifted. In their company are such famous gifted people as Nelson Rockefeller, Albert Einstein, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Edison, Hans Christian Anderson, Auguste Rodin, William Butler Yeats, and Gustave Flaubert.

The causes of learning disabilities are not known, but in our project each of our identified learning disabled students shows either an unusual pregnancy (trauma at birth, such as delayed delivery, prolonged or difficult delivery) or premature birth. They oftentimes have a genetic family history of similar learning disability problems.

An exerpt from my *Criterion and Behavioral Checklist for Adults With Specific Learning Disabilities* has been included as Appendix A.

/s/ MCS
6 June 1982
Ellensburg, Washington

[1]Daniel P. Hallahan and James M. Kauffman *Exceptional Children* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1978), pp. 121-122.

I. INTRODUCTION: THE NEED TO BECOME INVOLVED

Students in higher education who are learning disabled (LD) represent a significant challenge to those of us involved in academic instruction. When we hear that such students have problems dealing with abstract material, have difficulties in reading and writing, and sometimes in expressing themselves orally or processing information that is presented orally, we might consider the task monumental and be reluctant to become involved. However, examination of the actual potential and achievement of such students clearly indicates that any such hasty judgment would be ill advised. As pointed out by Myrtle Snyder in her introduction to this subject, many individuals whom we would have been pleased to include among our students were learning disabled. LD students have a *difficulty* in learning, but one that is not insurmountable. The primary characteristic identifying such students is that they perform at a level that is far below their intellectual capability. Two causes contribute to this discrepancy: first, the difficulties in learning, and second, the standard academic practices associated with instruction and evaluation of learning. The HELDS Project is directed to seeing what can be done about the second of these causes, and with a degree of success that is encouraging. The potential of such students to benefit from higher education is great. To recognize and respond to their special problems of learning, as well as to fairly evaluate their achieved level of competence in various fields of learning, requires concern and some willingness to modify instructional procedures on the part of college faculty. The purpose of the present discussion is to explore how such changes in instructional practice might be accomplished, with particular attention given to the field of Speech Communication. Since detailed consideration is best accomplished with reference to a specific course, the instruction suited to Interpersonal Communication has been singled out for discussion.

At the outset, it is important to bear in mind that often rather *minor* changes in instructional efforts can have dramatic impact on the success of LD students in our classrooms. However, they are doubly deserving of consideration because they will likely entail the additional benefit of increasing the effectiveness of our instruction for other students in a class who are *not* learning disabled. In fact, a motto that came to be increasingly seen as appropriate during the course of our year-long study of teaching methods at CWU was: "What helps the LD student will help the rest." When considering a modification of instructional practices it is also well to remember that the majority of students suffering a learning disability are of above average intelligence, and to have survived (many) times undetected) to the college level means that they are well motivated and have developed various study aids already to compensate in some measure for their difficulties in learning. Few instructors would not be

pleased by the prospect of teaching bright, well-motivated students who need a little additional help to be successful, enough to extend themselves a bit in their approach to instruction and evaluation. A final aspect to consider is that no reduction in standards is or should be part of the thinking related to the instruction of LD students. While some flexibility in assignments and evaluation might be deemed appropriate in order to accommodate limitations of performance or an approach to learning in a particular case, exactly the same standards of achievement can and should be applied equally to both LD and non-LD students.

II. SOME PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS RELATED TO INSTRUCTION

While instructional strategies for Interpersonal Communication will be covered in more detail in a later section, a number of general guidelines and goals for coverage of course content might best be identified prior to seeking particular implementation of them in a given case. One such guideline comes from the fact that students, especially LD students, benefit from a presentation of information that incorporates more than one modality of instruction. Use of multiple modalities allows the student to both see and hear (and sometimes feel) the details of whatever is being taught. Multiple modalities would of course include the use of films and visual aids such as over-head projection of diagrams that illustrate or model concepts and processes being discussed. But it also, and sometimes more effectively, can include small group discussion where ideas can be worked with while engaging in efforts to translate between verbal and nonverbal forms of informational content. It also includes such simple steps as writing things down on the blackboard at strategic times to reinforce their presentation verbally during the course of a lecture. This provides increased opportunity for LD students to get the correct spelling of terms so that they will be able to identify them in their reading — they become something of a "peg" upon which to hang particular course content. Most LD students are notoriously bad spellers in any case, and this additional help in getting a chance to get the spelling right without struggling to come up with their own version improves accuracy and efficiency of note-taking — probably for all students.

Another idea associated with the presentation of information in varied ways includes opportunity for questions and clarification during the course of a lecture. Just as there is translation involved in going from a verbal expression to a visual illustration, there can be gains in understanding by employing alternative verbalizations of information. Questions allow students to hear themselves and other students produce versions of what is being presented, usually at a level that is closer to achieved levels

of understanding and in terms more familiar to the learner. The opportunity to ask questions that seek clarification and/or test understanding while information is being presented is important to all students, and is apparently especially so in the case of LD students. Yet instructors on the college and university level are sometimes guilty of ignoring or discouraging questions during the course of a lecture, or leaving time for them only at the conclusion of a lecture when they can be of little value to the process of receiving information. Their main value at this point would be either elaboration or correction of information, both of which imply that the original content has already been adequately communicated.

An organized presentation of information is also important. The suggestion here would be to *preview* the information to be covered. This is, of course, a standard element of oral style that should be a familiar feature to people in Speech Communication, but the question needs to be asked: do we practice what we preach in this area as it would apply to lectures? The preview prepares the student to anticipate particular points to be covered in a lecture and is an obvious advantage in note-taking and "knowing where we're at" relative to whatever is being discussed. Simple devices such as previewing and highlighting information through emphasis and repetition have long been recognized as important to the oral transmission of information in speeches and lectures. If they are of such importance to normal listeners, think of how much greater importance they are to someone who has difficulty translating and interpreting information received orally!

Another general point of advice for presenting information concerns our choice of teaching strategy. Many instructors on the college level prefer the use of an inductive approach in which examples are used to present instances of a particular concept or principle and then attention is engaged in an effort to abstract out that which adequately captures the generalization detectable in each of the instances presented. Contrasted with this is what has been labeled as a deductive approach, in which the basic principles or concepts are simply stated at the beginning and then illustrated with examples. The deductive approach, because it is straightforwardly expository, is apparently much better suited to the learning strategies of LD students because the meaning sought in the examples has already been established in the form of a generalization that subsumes them.

While statements have been made that LD students have trouble dealing with abstract material, the evidence seems quite inconclusive on this point. The more likely explanation is that they have trouble following other people's processes of abstracting. If so, this is again probably true of most students and is only intensified in the case of LD students. Once abstract concepts have been learned LD students seem to have no trouble in employing them appropriately or developing further generalizations that result from their use. So the main lesson seems not to be that we should avoid the use of inductive teaching strategy, but rather that

such an approach is inappropriate for introducing basic concepts and principles later used to organize and analyze bodies of information. Thus the appropriate advice seems to be to avoid attempting the introduction of basic concepts and principles using the inductive approach. People will learn better when these are handled straightforwardly, i.e., first defined and then illustrated with examples. However, once mastery of particular concepts or principles has been achieved, we should be free to proceed using an inductive approach. We should not sacrifice the involvement produced when the inductive approach is used. There is the excitement of a search being conducted at the same time that the power of concepts and principles to organize information is demonstrated.

Lastly, so far as presenting information is concerned, mention should be made of the importance of concrete illustrations and examples. Very likely the same problems associated with grasping others' unfamiliar mental gymnastics while employing abstract concepts is involved here as was discussed in connection with inductive teaching methods above. Whether through experienced failure and frustration in the face of unexplained abstractions in the past or because this is genuinely part of a learning disability, LD students are more comfortable dealing with information (at least *new* information) when it is illustrated with examples that establish contact with concrete reality and observational experience. Many instructors on the college level are probably guilty of proceeding merrily along on an abstract plane of discussion for extended periods without occasionally descending to more concrete levels where examples could serve to clarify and illustrate the meaning of what is being discussed.

Turning to methods of evaluation and assignments, the general need here seems to be sensitivity to particular problems of LD students (which vary from individual to individual) and a willingness to be flexible in satisfying the purposes of evaluation. An oral examination might be in order on some occasions or extra time might be needed to complete an assignment that other students would have no trouble with. The same kind of ingenuity and flexibility that might be extended to a student who is blind or confined to a wheelchair may prove necessary. But ordinarily nothing *more* than this is required. The important point is to be prepared to recognize and adjust, within realistic limits, to accommodate a handicap that we would not ordinarily be sensitive to recognize and respond to.

A word should be included on course syllabi. Consistent with the discussion of previewing material and utilizing more than one modality for presenting information, an amplified syllabus that makes explicit the expectations and underlying assumptions of the course can be quite important. Detailed oral discussion of course objectives and assignments creates a framework for study that is especially important for the LD student. Many LD students have difficulty organizing their time as well as relating particular course content being covered to overall course objec-

tives. (Some instructors have been known to confess that they were not completely sure "where we're at in this course" at times as well.) An example of an expanded syllabus for a course in Interpersonal Communication is included as Appendix B following the present discussion.

When it comes to the use of objective exams taken in class there are obvious problems for the LD student. It is patently unfair to expect that an accurate evaluation of intellectual attainment can be achieved when problems in comprehending information presented in written form (i.e., the test) are further compounded by the imposition of a time limit! Other problems result if there are brief written responses to be completed as part of the exam. Out-of-class essay exams, with allowances made for deficiences of composition might be considered, as well as the possibility of an oral examination. However, there does not seem to be any standard approach to recommend because LD students differ markedly in the ways their disabilities manifest themselves. Some have mastered writing skills but would do miserably in an oral examination. With such diversity there is no alternative but to investigate and determine the best method for *this* student, especially when it is remembered that the main distinguishing characteristic of LD students is a discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement. Once this has been established, flexibility and ingenuity are needed to develop or utilize an existing form of evaluation that would be most effective. The ingenuity called for from the instructor is likely to be over-estimated in importance. It is important to remember that LD students have been dealing with this problem all of their lives and have managed to adjust to the requirements of academic study and testing. It is quite likely that they will have developed ideas about the form of testing that is most suited to demonstrating their knowledge and ability. If in doubt, ask them for ideas.

Returning to the use of objective exams and their construction as they might affect LD students, it was pointed out by one group of students that words in isolation fail to register as concepts, which makes one form of objective question quite difficult. In matching questions a list of terms is to be matched with definitions or examples. Because of the isolated terms that must be identified and matched, this type of question presents particular problems for some LD students. One way to handle this might be to simply skip this question and substitute another question (perhaps a take-home essay question) for this student.

One point that should have been brought out by the above discussion is that LD students share many problems in their efforts to deal with academic study at the college level, but they also exhibit extreme diversity in the particular manifestations that characterize their individual disability. We must avoid reacting to a stereotype of the LD student because here especially a stereotypical response won't do.

III. A WORD ABOUT COLLEGE-LEVEL INSTRUCTION

Considerations of pedagogy associated with the present effort to improve educational opportunities for LD students at the college and university level raises questions as to exactly what is being expected of faculty and, in particular, whether it is really appropriate to impose a concern with pedagogy upon college faculty. These questions received attention from faculty associated with the HELDS project and are probably present in the minds of faculty generally. So it is well to take them up and deal with such questions before proceeding.

In the course of discussing various ways that faculty could respond to the special needs of LD students it became apparent that some students might require individual time and attention on a one-to-one basis if we are really going to deal directly — or attempt to deal directly — with their difficulties of learning. At this time it was pointed out that most college-level instruction is designed to be one-to-many rather than one-to-one and that such efforts could represent a sizable burden in the way of time and energy.

While no real concensus was reached on this point, it can be observed that the primary thrust of the HELDS Project is directed to bringing about increased awareness of the fact that LD student *are present* in college classes. Therefore we should be aware that some accepted practices of instruction and testing may unnecessarily place them at a disadvantage in achieving success at learning, and, once learning is accomplished, demonstrating the competencies and knowledge they have acquired. Once the problem is recognized, some faculty may be motivated to engage in some one-on-one instruction while others may not. But a simple willingness to re-think instructional and testing practices as they might affect LD students represents significant progress. Then, if certain modifications of approach are seen to be reasonable in either presenting information or testing for learning, they can be considered in terms of feasibility and effort. Rather than a massive adaptation of the instructional process to accommodate LD students, what is being proposed is more properly to be described as a matter of awareness of difficulties and enhanced flexibility of approach that can facilitate learning and more adequately test accomplishment. Some modifications of instruction have already been discussed. In the next section some specific suggestions for more effective instruction in the case of interpersonal communication will be discussed. They can be considered on their merits.

It was also pointed out that college faculty are not hired (or trained) with emphasis placed upon pedagogical skills; instead they are subject-matter specialists whose main qualifications for teaching are being expert and productive scholars in their field. While some *are* expert in the area of instruction, such skill is not so widely distributed among faculty

that it can be assumed, and there is understandable resistance to any suggestion that such skills should be stressed for college faculty. While the force of this argument cannot be either adequately responded to or lightly dismissed, it remains to be seen how real or pervasive it might be as an obstacle to the goals of a project like HELDS.

A final set of questions relate to the nature of college material. Much college-level coursework is necessarily abstract in that it seeks to cover material that consists of particular ways of organizing information, establishing and recognizing patterns that yield a source of explanation, learning to analyze and interpret information treated as data in ways that establish principles, raise questions, suggest new approaches, etc. Rather than particular conclusions, a usual goal for instruction is learning to "think in the discipline" and deal with problems that are peculiar to the discipline. In a way, it could be said that each discipline is *itself* an abstraction because it represents a departure from events in ordinary experience to consider them in terms of their political, psychological, mathematical, economic, cultural, or whatever dimensions. Because of this, the principal mode of instruction is expository. While an instructor may make efforts to explain, illustrate, guide thinking, and correct misunderstandings, the main focus is on showing students how information is organized, questions posed, and answers achieved by going through it with them (or for them) with the expectation that they will be able to follow whatever mental gymnastics are required to complete the intellectual operations involved. Rather than teaching history or economics, etc., as a "body of knowledge" as might have been done in high school, the goal of college-level instruction is to produce historians, economists, psychologists, etc.—that is, students who have not only successfully assimilated previously established conclusions but have also acquired the capacity to generate *new* knowledge.

In view of the above, when it is observed that LD students have "difficulty" dealing with abstract material the natural reaction might be to throw up one's hands in despair. However, as was earlier discussed, this may well be the result of an over-simplification in our ways of thinking about abstraction. To reiterate a point made previously, LD students may only have greater than usual problems following other people's processes of abstracting. Certainly one would find adequate cause for caution in this area from cases such as Albert Einstein, who, despite being LD, was apparently eminently qualified to deal with abstractions!

The conclusion most justified by the preceding discussion would seem to be only that LD students pose some significant challenges to the higher educational effort. The actual range of problems, potential, and possible benefits that can arise through their presence on college campuses remain to be discovered.

We should also note the significant differences between high school and college-level instruction. At least what *should* typify college-level instruction is that questions are being examined in ways that lead behind

the question to its underlying assumptions and supporting rationale. When this is done it is not the conclusion (i.e., the right *answer*) that is of primary importance. Students, perhaps for the first time, are pushed to think and discover ways to think about questions. Information is no longer presented simply as "a body of knowledge" to be assimilated. At least to the degree that pre-college study represents following other people's thinking, we should now see that it poses special difficulties for LD students. Entrance to college may represent the first genuine chance for these students to blossom and reveal their true potential. When explanations rather than answers are the focus of study their true creative potential and intelligence have opportunity to shine. It's something to ponder.

IV. SOME SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

The following discussion is intended to illustrate some approaches for covering material in a lower-division course in interpersonal communication. Of course interpersonal communication covers a broad range of topics that might be included in a particular course, only a few of which have been chosen for consideration as to how they might be presented so that some concrete examples can be provided. Hopefully the topics discussed can serve the dual purpose of illustrating in a particular case and also yielding generalizable ideas for other areas of course content. My syllabus (see Appendix B) gives a general breakdown of topics included in the interpersonal communication course taught at Central.

One of the challenging things about teaching a course in interpersonal communication is the fact that it can be almost totally focused on academic principles and abstract concepts in one extreme or almost completely experiential and practical in the other. Usually a balance is chosen, and, in the present case, one that favors the coverage of academic principles and knowledge over either experience or skill. To cover the former without slighting the latter requires a strategy of instruction that builds knowledge and awareness rather simultaneously. The strategy chosen in the present course is to include essays, excerpts from plays, poetry, etc., that illustrate reactions to real-life experiences and deal with them in such a way as to reveal the principles of effective interpersonal communication. In view of what has been discussed previously regarding the LD student and processes of abstraction, this poses something of a problem. However, the use of a text can come to the rescue in this case because the first chapter usually covers a number of basic principles in straightforward deductive fashion that establishes a basic foundation for all later discussion. A day is usually sufficient to

discuss these principles after they have been assigned in the text. Here it is worth noting that this procedure does provide some help to the LD student, who, even if problems were encountered in obtaining these basic principles through reading the text, can still follow the discussion of them in class. Also, since the principles are accompanied by illustrating examples, class discussion usually centers around the appropriateness of the examples and, usually even without encouragement, students volunteer examples from their own experience that challenge and clarify the meaning of the principles. Thus the principles are able to be rather firmly grasped as to their meaning at the outset, at least as verbal formulas that may or may not really yield insight into communication processes and problems. (The LD student will likely lag behind in understanding due to problems in reading, but the opportunity to catch up is provided through the give and take of discussion of examples and personal experience.)

The course really gets underway with the topic of Self/Other Communication. Here I use George Orwell's essay "Shooting an Elephant." In an autobiographical piece, Orwell recalls his experience as peace officer in Burma while that county was still under British rule. An elephant under a temporary attack of "must" runs amuck and kills a coolie. Orwell finds himself with gun in hand and 2,000 natives expectantly waiting for him to shoot the elephant. Yet he is reasonably certain that the attack of "must" is over so that to shoot the animal would be wrong. His account details his inner turmoil as he is coerced by social pressures into violating his personal convictions, and apparent authority within the situation, so that at one point he describes himself as a "mere puppet."

In this assignment the basic material is conveyed by a reading assignment, but actual problems in reading can to some degree be compensated for as follows: first, while handing out the essay a brief synopsis of the situation developed in the essay can be used to spark interest and produce familiarity with the basic story line. Since many students (not just LD students) have difficulty getting past the plot to its underlying significance this is a useful procedure in any case. The discussion of "what happened?" can be continued during the next class session along with reactions from the students so that the essential outlines of the story are made clear even if one has missed the enjoyment of reading a superb piece of writing. Equally important to the overview capable of being worked into class discussion, however, is the use of a set of study questions that are passed out with the essay. (See Appendix C-1) From these, the students know what they are looking for while reading.

For this and other reading assignments it is possible to take advantage of tape-recorded materials (e.g., most textbooks are available in a recorded version for blind students. With advance selection of classes it is possible to create a tape-recorded version even for handouts such as Orwell's essay. At Central we have such services available and also preregistration for LD students to ensure that they will be able to plan and

execute a schedule of classes that incorporates maximum opportunity to learn.

Since peer instruction has been found to be useful to LD students (and others) I have found it useful to make provision for this by dividing the class into small discussion groups in which an effort is made to come up with group answers to the questions supplied on the list of questions handed out earlier.

Usually no more than 20 minutes is required for this, but it solidifies understanding of the essay, even for those who have had no problems in reading it and allows the rest of the class period to be spent developing communication principles. First, search can be made for application of principles covered previously, then an effort is made to develop new ones. Actually all of the communication principles covered by Giffin and Patton in *Interpersonal Communication in Action*[1] have relevance, but some are called into question by the circumstances confronting Orwell. For example, Proposition 4 states: "The choices that a person makes reflect the degree of that person's interpersonal communication competencies." The whole point of Orwell's discussion of his experience has been to show that he was rendered helpless by circumstances. This leads to discussion of a comparison between the pressures exerted by a potentially angry mob and the one or perhaps two other persons we are dealing with in ordinary interpersonal communication. When discussion is successful the difference is seen to be one of degree. The gulf that divides people has come into view, and with it questions of other people's interest in or knowledge of us. The principle can be formulated that our actions are often (always?) explainable at the level of surface observation: the individual response to circumstances. This of course harks back to an earlier communication principle: that we can't not communicate. But it adds the further twist that, because things can be explained at the level of surface observation, there is no necessary interest in or awareness of our feelings, inner conflicts, hopes, or frustrations.

The above discussion can be prolonged or short; the important point is that it lays the ground work for further discussion focused on self-images, self-esteem, listening, nonverbal communication, assertiveness, relationships, etc. In fact, my experience has been that virtually any aspect of interpersonal communication can be developed from this basic set of insights concerning inner and outer experience and awareness. The direction I personally choose to develop next is Self-Image, considered in terms of George Mead's I/Me dichotomy as developed in *Mind, Self & Society*.[2] Here a visual illustration can be provided through a diagram

[1]Bobby R. Patton and Kim Giffin, *Interpersonal Communication in Action*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1981).

[2] Charles W. Morris, ed., *Mind, Self, and Society*, works of George Herbert Mead (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), I.

consisting of a series of concentric circles where the inner-most circle represents the Self, surrounded by successive layers of learning, adaptation to circumstances, discovered potential, social responsibilities, etc. (see Appendix C-2) The Self, looking out, and observing his or her involvement in and responsibilities toward people and situations correspond with Mead's "I"; the capacity to look back at ourselves from a social perspective corresponds to Mead's "me."

The diagram is based directly upon the previously discussed principles developed through examination of Orwell's experience and also has sufficient generality of application to serve as an undergirding framework of discussion for all but a few of the problem areas of interpersonal communication taken up later. Furthermore, what is illustrated in the diagram represents an analytical summary of principles covered and illustrated with examples so that the problem of developing abstractions as tools for analyzing communication is to some degree solved in a progressive sweep that begins with abstract principles, descends to concrete experience, and then ascends once more to the level of abstract generalizations.

The same procedure of distributing study questions in advance works well for films as well as handouts and was actually developed as an instructional aid before becoming involved in the HELDS project because of my frustrations in trying to get meaningful discussion started after showing a film or distributing an article, essay, or a portion of a play, etc. Students, in my experience, are simply not skillful readers or observers. This was especially the case in using Carl Rogers' filmed lecture "Some Personal Learnings About Interpersonal Relationships." This film is chock full in insights about people, their experienced alienation, and problems in hearing others and expressing ourselves honestly.

But before developing the list of study questions that previewed a few ideas and examples of lessons deserving particular attention (e.g., "Do you think it is possible to listen below the conscious intent of a speaker?" and "Why is advice of sympathy unacceptable when we are in trouble?" and "What does Carl Rogers mean by 'congruence'? How does being 'congruent' compare with being phoney? If you aren't congruent are you necessarily phoney?") the results of showing this film were quite disappointing. By the time the film was over, trying to resurrect memories of what had been said for purposes of discussion proved almost futile. With the questions there is opportunity for either peer instruction in groups or a genuine review of the film discussing the major ideas and their implications for increased understanding of problems of interpersonal communication.

I am convinced that the above procedure is probably an aid to the coverage of handouts and films used in connection with the course, but since becoming involved with the HELDS Project, I am increasingly

aware that my fondness for dittoed handouts probably still works to the disadvantage of LD students in the class. But there are other aspects of the course that do not rely on the text or other assigned reading.

One such aspect is the use of out-of-class projects. In one such project the assignment is to develop a survey of student knowledge and opinions related to interpersonal communication that is later written up in three sections employing the format of a research paper (i.e., preliminary statement of preparation and expectations, results, and analysis and conclusions). Assistance is given in developing meaningful questions dealing with various aspects such as listening, nonverbal communication, friendship, honesty in communication, problems in meeting people, etc. The project is useful in increasing involvement with the course and developing more analytical writing skills, but one of the main benefits was unanticipated at the time of developing the assignment. When the surveys are completed one or two class periods are devoted to a general session discussing findings and sharing what was learned. Students are usually quite capable of explaining what they set out to investigate and problems and surprises encountered in the answers obtained from their respondents. Oftentimes a lively discussion of communication ensues that both reviews previously covered problems and principles or leads into impromptu consideration of aspects yet to be covered in the course. Here I might mention that LD students are expected to be as responsible as other students in completing written work out of class, and many should have opportunity to excel in the execution and discussion of their project.

Another out-of-class project is called the "Listen to Yourself Listen" project and is simpler in its requirements so far as time and writing it up. In covering principles of listening, as is done briefly in the present course, emphasis is made of the fact that listening is a more or less continuous process that is, for the most part, carried on unconsciously and critically — i.e., we habitually react (to ourselves) with judgments and opinions on the correctness of what is being spoken by people about us. This is especially true when we are listening to people that we don't know personally and when they are not engaged in conversation with us. To investigate the validity of this proposition students are assigned to report on just five instances when they were able to catch themselves listening to remarks made by people in conversations they were not a party to. Invariably a majority of students report having difficulty catching themselves listening but eventually get the task completed; a few others invariably confuse the assignment and see it as an assignment to find five "unreasonable" remarks made by others. (I'm still struggling with how to successfully make this assignment.) When the results are in, a class period can be set aside to discuss the things learned as a result of the assignment. Self-observations range from the trivial to the sublime, but generally produce some increased awareness of the attitudes brought to interpersonal communication, especially if the subject of stereotypes has

been covered previously. In any case the assignment affords a lead-in to the topic of operating assumptions in interaction. Even in the case of those who fail to correctly focus on their own listening behavior and only report their observations as conclusions, a few well-chosen questions are usually sufficient to show that their conclusions contain numerous assumptions about the people being listened to.

In any case the above assignments provide a useful break from the time spent on reading and discussing readings in connection with the course. They also lead beyond knowledge and principles to areas of application which is one of the primary objectives of the course. The same objective of producing application is true of another assignment used in the course, one that deserves special mention here because it should be successful as an aid to instruction in the case of the LD student. Once a degree of sophistication has been developed in identifying problems and approaches useful in interpersonal communication, a day is set aside for role-playing problems submitted anonymously for this purpose. (Note: it is well to *screen* these problems before use.) Problems are placed in a hat (or a box, since few people wear hats these days) and then drawn out by volunteers to act out in class. Procedures are discussed briefly in the syllabus and are more formally set forth in a handout titled "Goal Activity Analysis" (see Appendix C-4). The goal is first to portray the problem as accurately as possible and then seek to identify a strategy for its resolution. After this (and much discussion of the meaning of the problem and various ideas for handling it in most cases) another portrayal is attempted with the "problem person" attempting to proceed according to the former pattern. Results are admittedly varied, both according to the nature of the problem and the ability of the actors to fulfill their roles (and some classes fail to develop sufficient rapport for this exercise to be completely successful), but the occasional success can be quite dramatic in terms of its being a source of insight into available alternatives in dealing with "real life" problems of interpersonal communication. I might mention that to encourage contributions of meaningful problems I save good examples from previous quarters and one session is spent simply discussing them before the session in which they are expected to engage in a role-playing effort.

To dwell upon the effectiveness of the above procedure for the LD student for a moment, it can be pointed out that the exercise brings the level of discussion down to dealing with concrete experiences and in a way that seeks to find application for knowledge and principles that have been covered in more abstract ways previously. Additionally, the exercise again incorporates a great deal of peer discussion as a source of learning in contrast to the less effective (though possibly more efficient) method of lecturing as a means of covering material.

Turning to the subject of lecturing for a moment, one of the frequently mentioned complaints of L.D. students that was touched upon earlier is the instructor's penchant for continuing on for long periods with no pause for questions. Perhaps because I personally dislike the burdens of

lecturing, I long ago developed an approach of focusing lectures around one or more major questions, with subordinate questions, that are able to be thrown out to the class periodically, liberally sprinkled into the planned coverage. For example, in lecturing about the importance of family backgrounds and birth-order effects in terms of their continuing impact on interpersonal attitudes and awareness, numerous questions can be worked in in connection with examples such as "What do you suppose will be the effects of two older-sisters-of-sisters who decide to become friends?" or "What kind of relationship might we expect to develop between an older-brother-of-brothers and a youngest-sister-of-brothers?" These questions are not only answerable in terms of a straightforward application of research findings discussed earlier in the presentation, they serve to solidify understanding, increase involvement with the material, and not infrequently lead to some interesting discussions of examples volunteered by students. Incidentally, know that it's standard advice to intersperse examples through one's lectures to heighten interest and provide illustrations, but if you encourage students to volunteer examples and *do something* with them when they are offered, you can usually significantly decrease your efforts to think up examples that illustrate points on your own — and besides, many student examples are more interesting than the anecdotes and stories I soon grow tired of repeating anyway. There's an additional advantage to encouraging questions and student involvement in discussions initiated in connection with lectures: they can provide *invaluable feedback* on how well understanding has been achieved on points covered. If the LD student is helped by the opportunity to ask questions, the instructor is equally in need of information on how clearly his points are being comprehended.

Of course there is one drawback to the above that I'm sure comes readily to mind to every instructor of a class — especially a class in interpersonal communication. I refer of course to the occasional student who seems just a bit obtuse in getting the point but loves to ramble on with seemingly endless examples from their vast experience that nine times out of ten are complete non-sequiturs so far as the point of the lecture is concerned. The strategy I have developed is not completely successful in handling this situation — and there's no way I know of to effectively silence the first few outbursts of ignorance without being noticeably rude. However, after you have the culprit spotted you can try to break for questions only when sufficient interest has been generated so that several students are ready to respond. Then call on someone else, and someone else, and someone else. When you finally do call on the monopolizer of discussion time he or she will usually have gotten the point that your desire is to spread the discussion time around the class more evenly. If all else fails, there's always the rather cumbersome expedient of a tactful discussion after class is over. Another method I find myself frequently using is simply to ask the person to explain the relevance or their "examples" to the principle being discussed. I can then

be as cruel or as merciful as the occasion demands in making the point that examples that are brought up should be done so in a way that exhibits relevance to established principles of communication. At the cost of a few extra moments of time, it's thus possible to regain control of your class and also create a more serious attitude of discussion devoted to examples for the course as a whole.

Another substitute for straight lecturing that I have found useful in the past, and that I believe might be helpful to the LD student, is the generation of a list of points on some topic as they are volunteered by the class. It's also a variation on the use of study questions as a means of pulling out the main areas of significance in a handout. For example, one of the articles I like to use in teaching the interpersonal communication class is called "The Three Stages of Marriage." The authors provide an interesting discussion of what they term the "honeymoon" as Stage I which is followed by disillusionment and conflict in Stage II and finally (at least in some cases) the happy resolution of conflicts that leads to Stage III. One of the main values of the articles, or simply of discussing *marriage* in a class in interpersonal communication for that matter, is that the conflicts are so clearly the result of disillusionment arising out of unexamined assumptions brought to the relationship that are later painfully shattered by direct experience. The main point is to discuss the dynamics of the transitions between stages, but the stages themselves provide such clear contrasts that it's relatively simple to stand at the board and write down a list of traits students have been able to identify with each stage. Clear identification of the traits characteristic of each stage and the reasons for them, can be discussed while deciding how (and sometimes if) to write them down. The result of the proceedings is to provide ample opportunity to discuss both the meaning of the stages and their dynamics as they might illustrate principles of interpersonal communication, and at the same time do so with a large amount of student participation in the process.

It's time to discuss evaluation in terms of tests. In addition to the class projects discussed previously and class participation (which is graded in this case), there is one other major assignment, in addition to mid-term and final examinations, that I have found useful in the case of the interpersonal communication class. This is a critical review of one of the many books that are out now in which various authors are offering advice for dealing with problems of interpersonal communication. While I fully believe in the value of this assignment, being convinced of its effectiveness in stirring students to a critical effort to examine just what they know — besides its being a useful writing assignment which students need, and an encouragement to read a good book which some need even more — I would have to reconsider its appropriateness in the case of at least some LD students. For some, problems could be alleviated somewhat by having the book put on tape so that they can listen as well as read, as is done in the case of textbooks. (Perhaps this could be done

for handouts used frequently and allay at least some pangs of conscience there as well.) However, few of the books on my reading list would be recorded for the blind. In any case, I believe a reasonable course of action would be to discuss the assignment with the LD student in such cases and see if some alternative might be found for this assignment. For example, if a research paper or an oral report on some aspect of interpersonal communication would be suitable, then a substitution could be considered. As for the mid-term and final, I have long since developed a procedure that satisfies my objectives for evaluation and that also seems appropriate for use with LD students. The major form of the exam is a take-home consisting of a choice of short-essay questions. Since the questions involve applications of principles or comparisons of problems or concepts there are no answers to be found in the text. Since my intention is to make the examinations challenging and also a potential learning experience — and I also do *not* grade on a curve — I have found it possible to encourage students to study for taking the exam together *and with the exam in hand* at the time. Typically I pass out the exam on a Thursday and it is due the following Tuesday. The first part of the period is spent reading through the exam as a group, in which case I read each question aloud to check for clarity, focus, and possible ambiguities. Then the class is invited to break up into small discussion groups to consider the questions and possible approaches to answering them — and which ones seem easiest — for the rest of the period. Further study sessions are also encouraged. I do warn them that they are individually responsible for their answers. Specifically this means that if the group goes astray and they decide to follow the group, they'll all suffer because "there's no strength in numbers" during the grading process.

I realize this procedure might appear rather questionable. However, after employing it for some ten years now (and before knowing about LDs in my classroom), I am satisfied that it represents a genuine test of learning — at least more genuine than a number of other approaches in common use, and it makes the test-of-learning a meaningful experience rather than simply an ordeal to be crammed for, gotten through, and forgotten. When it comes to the writing of their individual answers the students are still faced with coming up with the most adequate expression of their understanding they can muster. If they've tried to borrow some ideas from some more advanced member of a study group they were in, they still exhibit a lack of skill in the use of important involved concepts, answers tend to be incomplete, and needed qualifications are missing. In short, unless they out-and-out *cheat* by copying someone else's answers, they are forced to come up with their own version of the answer, in which case I maintain the degree of competence will show through. One further thing I should mention is that I attempt to write questions that involve sufficient depth of insight and integration of ideas that a small book *could* be written in response, but they are limited to a half page, double-spaced, typed response to cover the most significant

features of an answer. But it's also the case that only one or two major areas of previous coverage in class are highlighted in the question. I have received occasional grumblings and complaints but these are usually taken care of with the mid-term. Later, I encounter genuine expressions of appreciation for the procedure and, since these tend to come from the better students in the class, I give them some credence. There are less than happy shows of enthusiasm from the poorer students who are puzzled by their inability to take advantage of so obvious an opportunity to do well. But consider their plight: the same problem confronts them as has been present throughout the course. To do well they must "crack the code" of seeing how the concepts and principles work in operation. (I believe it was Carl Hemple who asserted that to understand the terminology of a discipline is to understand the discipline.) At the same time their efforts to deal with the questions reveal rather clear differences. "A" students seem to "see around" the question, understanding not only the question, but where it came from in the context of past discussion; "B" students grasp the question but only do an adequate job of answering it; "C" students introduce a few distortions or omissions in approaching the meaning of the question and occasional gaps in understanding are exposed; "D" students exhibit more serious deficiences and even introduce ideas flatly ruled out by the correct application of a principle or concept under discussion, and they seem to have trouble finding enough meaning in the question to write half a page on it without rambling into irrelevancies. "E" students? Well when you've given a choice of eight or more questions and asked for a selection of just four they feel comfortable with, then I feel little reluctance in marking it with a zero — and it's still the case that they have to be consistently awful in order to actually fail the exam.

But now consider the positive side of the exam procedure outlined above. The students are allowed to take the exam without the pressures of time and with ample opportunities to reflect on the meaning of the question and formulate their best response. They have also had opportunity to benefit from the assistance that comes through discussion with peers. Both of these aspects of the exam would seem of especial benefit to the LD student for reasons discussed previously. Ideas missed in reading have opportunity to be added, distinctions missed previously have opportunity to be established, insights incompletely accomplished have opportunity to be more firmly seen, etc. And if it wasn't learned until this time it frankly bothers me but little. The main thing is that it is learned and the knowledge is taken with them from their experience of the course.

V. LEARNING DISABILITIES AND THE DISCIPLINE OF SPEECH COMMUNICATION: SOME MORE GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

We in "basic skills" areas like Speech Communication should be especially concerned with meeting the needs of LD students. Though public speaking is likely to be the course most often involved in such instruction, many campuses use a course that includes skills but seeks to provide a general survey of principles and skills. In either case, in these and a number of courses we have opportunity to enhance the opportunities for LD students to perform successfully at the college level. By teaching elements of oral style, organization, listening, methods of analysis, support for ideas, we give valuable tools to every student to be more successful in asking questions and receiving information orally. Such skills have obvious relevance for the LD students on our campuses. We ought not to overlook them. More specialized "skills courses" such as discussion, argumentation, and interviewing can do even more than the introductory courses to increase LD students' abilities to benefit from their college experience. But the points made previously should be seen to apply: practice of principles of good communication should be combined with instructional practices that facilitate learning for LD students.

With courses more oriented to theory, e.g., rhetorical and communication theory, persuasion, organizational communication, criticism, nonverbal communication, and listening theory and research, methods can be sought to include concrete illustrations wherever possible. Peer instruction and coverage of principles through class discussion are appropriate alternatives to lectures in many cases. Films that supplement coverage in texts could be increased in usage, or at least identified to students who, as in the case of the LD student, might wish to take advantage of their contributions to learning through visual as well as verbal information. The use of out-of-class work that allows flexibility and pacing in its completion can be used to supplement or even substitute for assignments and methods of evaluation that provide less opportunities to LD students. With awareness and concern, I for one am optimistic the results would soon be seen to have been worth a little additional thought and effort.

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APPENDIX A

Criterion and Behavioral Checklist for Adults with Specific Learning Disabilities

1. Short attention span.

2. Restlessness.

3. Distractability. (The student seems especially sensitive to sounds or visual stimuli and has difficulty ignoring them while studying.)

4. Poor motor coordination. (This may be seen as clumsiness.)

5. Impulsivity. (Responding without thinking.)

6. Perseveration. (The student tends to do or say things over and over. Mechanism that says "finished" does not work well.)

7. Handwriting is poor. (Letters will not be well formed, spacing between words and letters will be inconsistent, writing will have an extreme up or down slant on unlined page.)

8. Spelling is consistently inconsistent.

9. Inaccurate copying. (The student has difficulty copying things from the chalkboard and from textbooks; for instance, math problems may be off by one or two numbers that have been copied incorrectly or out of sequence.)

10. Can express self well orally but fails badly when doing so in writing. In a few cases the reverse is true.

11. Frequently misunderstands what someone is saying. (For instance, a student may say, "What?", and then may or may not answer appropriately before someone has a chance to repeat what was said previously.)

12. Marked discrepancy between what student is able to understand when listening or reading.

13. Has trouble with variant word meanings and figurative language.

14. Has problems structuring (organizing) time -- The person is frequently late to class and appointments; seems to have no "sense of how long a "few minutes" is opposed to an hour; has trouble pacing

self during tests.

15. Has problems structuring (organizing) space -- The student may have difficulty concentrating on work when in a large, open area -- even when it's quiet; may over or under-reach when trying to put something on a shelf (depth perception).

16. Has difficulty spacing an assignment on a page, e.g., math problems are crowded together.

17. Thoughts -- ideas wander and/or are incomplete in spoken and written language. Student may also have difficulty sequencing ideas.

18. Sounds -- A student's hearing acuity may be excellent, but when his brain processes the sounds used in words, the sequence of sounds may be out of order: e.g., the student hears "aminal" instead of "animal" and may say and/or write the "aminal."

19. Visual selectivity -- May have 20/20 vision but when brain processes visual information, e.g., pictures, graphs, words, numbers, student may be unable to focus visual attention selectively; in other words, everything from a flyspeck to a key word in a title has equal claim on attention.

20. Word retrieval problems -- the student has difficulty recalling words that have been learned.

21. Misunderstands non-verbal information, such as facial expressions or gestures.

22. Very slow worker -- but may be extremely accurate.

23. Very fast worker -- but makes many errors and tends to leave out items.

24. Visual images -- Has 20/20 vision but may see things out of sequence, e.g., "frist" for "first," "961" for "691." Or, a student may see words or letters as if they are turned around or upside down: e.g., "cug" for "cup," or "dub" for "bud," or "9" for "L" for "7," etc.

25. Makes literal interpretations. You will have to have them give you feedback on verbal directions, etc.

26. Judges books by their thickness because of frustration when learning to read.

27. Has mixed dominance: e.g., student may be right handed and left eyed.

28. Moodiness -- Quick tempered, frustration.

29. Cannot look people in the eyes and feels uncomfortable when talking to others.

30. Has trouble answering yes or no to questions.

Students with specific learning disabilities which affect their performance in math generally fall into two groups:

1. Those students whose language processing (input and output) and/or reading abilities are impaired. These students will have great difficulty doing word problems; however, if the problems are read to them, they will be able to do them.

2. Those students whose abilities necessary to do quantitative thinking are impaired. These students often have one or more problems such as the following:

A. Difficulty in visual-spatial organization and in integrating nonverbal material. For example, a student with this kind of problem will have trouble estimating distances, distinguishing differences in amounts, sizes, shapes, and lengths. Student may also have trouble looking at groups of objects and telling what contains the greater amount. This student frequently has trouble organizing and sequencing material meaningfully on a page.

B. Difficulty in integrating kinesthetic processes. For example, a student will be inaccurate in copying problems from a textbook or chalkboard onto a piece of paper. The numbers may be out of sequence or the wrong numbers (e.g., copying "6" for "5"). Problems may be out of alignment on the paper. Graph paper is a must for them.

C. Difficulty in visually processing information. Numbers will be misperceived: "6" and "9," "3" and "8" and "9" are often confused. The student may also have trouble revisualizing. i.e., calling up the visual memory of what a number looks like or how a problem should be laid out on a page.

D. Poor sense of time and direction. Usually, students in the second group have the auditory and/or kinesethic as their strongest learning channels. They need to use manipulative materials accompanied by oral explanations from the instructor. They often need to have many experiences with concrete materials before they can move on successfully to the abstract and symbolic level of numbers.

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APPENDIX B

COM 253, Interpersonal Communication
SYLLABUS
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Buln. 252, 963-1066
Office Hrs.: PM by appt.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Interpersonal communication is a term that generally refers to communicative contacts people maintain with friends, family and acquaintances on an informal level and employers, professional people, business associates, etc., on a more formal level. Interpersonal communication obviously varies in depth, quality and objectives according to the people involved and the situation.

The purpose of this course is two-fold: first, to develop an understanding of the many factors that influence the quality and effectiveness of interpersonal communication, and second, to develop the particular knowledge and skills that are needed for increased competence.

Many problems of interpersonal communication have their source in a lack of clarity with respect to goals and our own options within situations. Much of what we do and observe others doing about interpersonal difficulties and problems are simply habitual rather than the result of considered reflection. In fact, there are usually many alternative courses of action available to us; in practice we usually fail even to notice. For example, if we want someone to do some particular thing and they refuse. We might become angry, we might seek ways to apply pressure on them to force them to do what we want, we might retreat into hurt sulking-type behaviors hoping in that way to make them feel guilty and give in to our demands. Both research and common observation confirm that one option is unlikely to occur to us: to simply inquire how the other person views the request and *listen* to what they have to say and *then* see what options are available to both parties.

Interpersonal communication on a practical level is an exploration of options and the interpersonal skills of communication needed to better handle situations where understanding, cooperation, negotiation, assertiveness, etc., are needed.

A good deal of knowledge gained from research and theory underlies the principles of effective communication. As indicated above, first priority in this course will be given to the academic study of interpersonal communication. This will be especially apparent on examinations where, if problems are presented, the answer will be expected to focus on theory and principles related to their analysis and resolution. Also in class discussions, the free exploration of ideas will be encouraged; however, as a student in this course you should know that opinions should ultimately be able to be supported with analysis and reasoning and appeal to relevant principles of communication. Efforts will be made to encourage such insights into applying principles and established, authoritive judgment on matters under consideration.

PROCEDURES: This class employes a letcure/discussion format. Students will be expected to come to class prepared to consider questions, seek amplification and comprehend illustrations and examples for ideas presented in assigned chapters and occasional handouts. Many class periods will begin with a general lecture/discussion session and then move to an exercise, or a problem under general discussion can give rise to an occasion for a mini-lecture in the midst of the discussion. When such occasions arise you are responsible for the material covered. Oftentimes this will be clearly indicated by reference to a possible examination question, but, if in doubt either ask or make the assumption that such is the case.

On some occasions the bulk of a class may be taken up by an exercise designed to create greater awareness or ability in interpersonal communication. Unless you have a good memory or immediate opportunity to create some notes for reflection upon later, it's a good practice to keep a note pad handy to catch a few details of what happened. Elaborate on these notes during your study time and then seek to understand the point of the exercise and any possible discoveries related to communication principles or, more likely, insights into your own personal involvement and approach to interpersonal communication.

A number of films have been found to be of value in connection with this course. On most occasions when a film is shown a set of study questions will be given to you in advance of the film followed by opportunity to discuss the film and the questions in small groups. In such cases the above suggestions on note-taking also apply. The main benefit of this, or any course for that matter, will only occur as you translate what is covered into terms and statements that make sense to you yourself. It's one thing to take information in, it's another step to turn it into a usable form; information does you no good, in practical terms, if you cannot apply it or see its relevance. Communication skills, like tennis serves and golf swings, get rusty with disuse and improve with practice. Seek opportunities to put ideas into practice.

An attitude of *experimentation* is helpful in connection with many aspects of this course. Many students report immediately trying out a suggested communication tactic on friends and family. But in class as well an experimental attitude is helpful. On some occasions we will engage in role-playing some problems in class and an approach to the situation will be suggested that may not seem natural or comfortable to you. The gains in flexibility of approach should be worth the price of being temporarily "out of character." At other times we'll explore the "usual" approach to some situation and then criticise the performance, *constructively*. The goal here is to identify alternatives and try it again. Improvement may not be immediate, but a few "goofs" and minor embarrassments accompany this type of learning and quickly pass into history and are forgotten. The general atmosphere we seek to maintain during class exercise sessions is one of good humor and cooperative, mutual exploration of communicative styles, strategies and approaches.

OBJECTIVES: While a number of course objectives can be seen in the above discussion, the following list may help to keep the purposes of the class in focus:

1. Acquire an increased understanding of the principles underlying effective communication.
2. Understand the complex ways in which interpersonal communication affects interpersonal relationships, and vice versa.
3. Identify your own strengths and weaknesses as a communicator.
4. Ability to anticipate what might occur in a conversation or relationship, sometimes avoiding problems and sometimes achieving genuinely satisfying results.
5. Making more intelligent and informed choices among alternatives in communication situations by being more aware of communication processes and also cognizant of the array of alternatives usually available.
6. Develop a wider repertoire of communication techniques, particularly an ability to metacommunicate, i.e., communicate *about* communication, and thereby achieving greater clarity and effectiveness.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATIONS:

I. Book Review. Written analysis of one of the many books currently available that deal with information and advice on interpersonal communication. A list of books will be provided as well as guidelines for the review. (20%)

II. Class Participation. Quality and quantity of effort in discussion of readings, exercises and problems, plus write-ups for out-of-class

assignments. These will be few in number and designed to produce increased awareness of interpersonal communication and some practice in writing mini-research reports. Details will be given with each such assignment; evaluation in this case will be S/U.

Class participation is essential to getting the maximum benefit from this course. This does *not* mean seeking to have something to say on everything discussed; it does mean keeping abreast of what is going on in the class, being involved and contributing when you have an insight or opinion, keeping an active curiosity regarding what is being covered or discussed, raising questions that are relevant and important, etc. (25%)

III. Bi-weekly, objective quizzes to check understanding of assigned reading, films shown, or, in some cases, other content that will be explicitly identified in advance. (10%)

IV. Mid-term exam. This will be a take-home, short-essay type of exam with questions designed to test ability to identify or apply covered principles of communication. Both for this exam and the final exam, the evaluation will be based on the qualitative judgment of the instructor. The purpose of this is to free students from any pressures of competition. What you obtain as a grade will depend entirely upon what you, individually do and not on how well or poorly anyone else did on this exam. This allows for the use of a collaborative study session, in class, where groups of students can share ideas and approaches and learn from each other, obtain clarification and a deeper grasp of each question and the various ways it can be approached and dealt with. With essay exams there is no *one* right approach or *the* correct answer. The purpose of essay exams is to assess the depth and quality of your understanding. (10%)

V. Final Exam. Short-essay as in the case of the mid-term and the same procedures will apply. The final examination period scheduled for the course will be used to discuss the exam. (35%)

Some options: Below are two optional assignments able to be substituted for Item I (Book Review):

Option I. Oral report on some area important to course content. You must seek advice and approval for this option and do so *prior* to the end of the sixth week of the course.

Option II. Critical analysis of an exchange between two characters in a novel or play. Seek advice and approval on the appropriateness of the novel or play selected and for an appropriate format for the paper.

Text: INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION IN ACTION, Basic Text and

Readings (3rd Ed.), Bobby R. Patton and Kim Giffin (Harper & Row, Pub.) 1980.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS:

I. The dimensions of interpersonal communication
   — introductory survey of principles and goals for com munication

II. Self/Other Communication
   — social roles and the force of expectations from others
   — self-held expectation and self-esteem
   — origins of self-image in family background, continuing influence

III. Assertiveness in communication
   — what assertiveness is *not*
   — what assertiveness requires and what makes it work
   — goals of assertiveness

IV. Communication in relationships: the challenge of change
   — friendship, marriage
   — the interpretation of commitment and trust
   — challenges to communicate
   — patterns of interaction/communication

V. Communication principles for conflicts and disagreements
   — avoiding a contest of wills
   — encouraging positive results

VI. Nonverbal communication
   — forms of nonverbal communication
   — problems and principles

VII. More communication patterns and problems
   — attitudes and actions as a source of problems
   — jealousy, intrapersonal explanations

APPENDIX C-1

Questions for George Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant" developed by Roger Garrett (from *Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays*, Harcourt, Brace & World, 1950)

Why does Orwell begin by telling us that he was "hated by large numbers of people"? If you think that this hatred played an important part in his decision to shoot the elephant, do you think it is offered as an excuse or merely as information that helps explain his action?

Orwell expresses frustration at being trapped in his role as a "peace of-

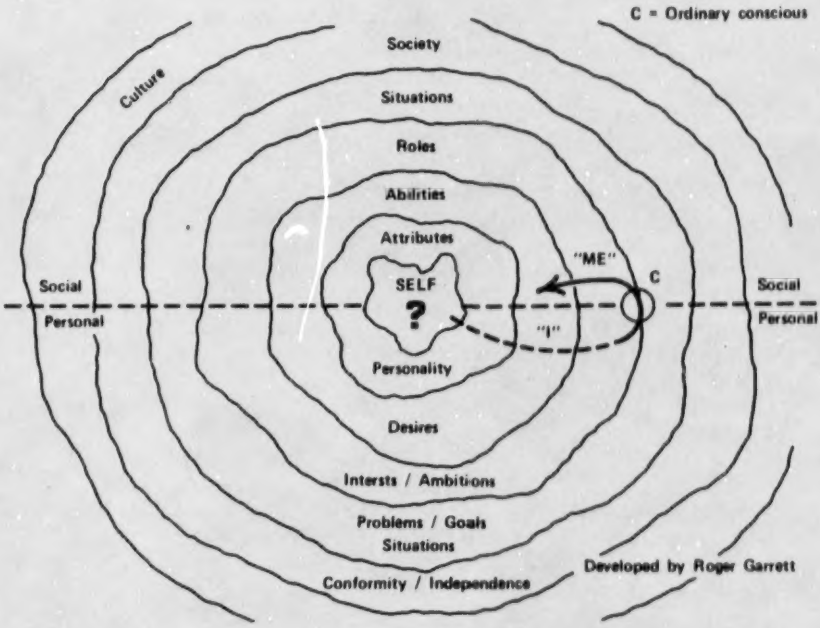
ficer" — at one point calling himself "a mere puppet" in the situation. What lesson might Orwell be trying to teach us about this frustration? Are there other, less dramatic, examples of a conflict between a person's real convictions and their role that you can think of?

Orwell faces his having "given in" to the pressures of the situation. Because of this he possibly discovers some truths about limitations we are subject to in our dealings with other people. Try to identify these limitations. Where do they come from?

Apparently the other officers later did not suspect that Orwell had been in any conflict over shooting the elephant. Orwell chooses not to pursue the matter with them. Why not? Does he indicate that he sees a difference between himself and the other officers?

What differences do you see between Orwell and the other officers?

APPENDIX C-2



APPENDIX C-3

THINGS TO LISTEN FOR/QUESTIONS TO ANSWER: CARL ROGERS, "Some Personal Learnings...."

What kind of attention and to what kind of things is Carl Rogers directing our attention to when he talks about "really hearing someone"?

Do you think it is possible to listen below the conscious intent of the speaker?

What is the "dungeon" Carl Rogers is referring to? What do you think creates "dungeons"? Have you ever heard any messages from dungeons? Have you ever sent any? Were they heard?

What kind of lessons might we learn from the stories of the emotionally cold business executive and the "prickly" hyperactive woman whose feelings were "buried under concrete"?

On being heard:

Create a short list of the satisfactions of being heard.

What does Carl Rogers see as the main problem associated with really being heard by other people?

Why is advice and/or sympathy unacceptable when we are in trouble?

Why should Rogers speak of being "rescued" by people who have listened to him?

What does he mean by saying that when one isn't listened to you discover that you are *alone?*

On being real:

What does Carl Rogers mean by "congruence"? How does being "congruent" compare with being phoney? If you aren't congruent are you necessarily phoney?

On allowing separateness:

What does it mean to give freedom to someone that you deeply care

about? Is their independence a threat? How? Why?

What is involved in an "I/Thou Relationship?" What risks do we expose ourselves to when we enter a close relationship?

What do you make of Carl Rogers' idea of treating people like *sunsets?*

Developed by Roger Garrett

APPENDIX C-4

GOAL ANALYSIS ACTIVITY

The general intent of exercises in goal analysis is to role-play situations of interpersonal communication so that problems and approaches to IP can be identified and discussed. Through re-enactment of a problem situation the stage is set for exploration, analysis, and consideration of the various ways of proceeding. Special attention should be focused on the desired *outcome* of the interaction. Once this goal has been clearly established, various strategies can be assessed for their potential for reaching the desired outcome.

Procedure:

1. Generally describe the scene. It would be helpful to pick as specific a scene as possible. The scene must include a) two people, b) each person should, ideally, occupy a distinct and different role, c) a difficulty in reaching d) some desired outcome or resolution of things that one of the persons (the protagonist) desires to see achieved.

2. Provide a preliminary analysis of the situation including:
   a) a listing of applying communication norms
   b) identification of roles and how each person interprets his/her role
   c) a description of the goals of each person in the situation.

3. Role-play the situation and then discuss what happened in terms of applying principles of interpersonal communication, e.g., common ground, listening, nonverbal communication, language, defensive communication strategies. Examine what happened in terms of its appropriateness or inappropriateness for achieving the desired goal. Try to identify some alternatives that are still consistent with the norms of the situation, the roles of the individuals, and their expectations for each other.

4. Develop a communication strategy for the protagonist that has a good chance of succeeding. Re-enact the situation using the new strategy.

5. Discuss what happened in Step 4 including the adequacy of the strategy for achieving the goal, problems and pitfalls associated with the strategy—especially those areas where trust, responsiveness, cooperation, etc., from the other person might impose limitations on the success of the approach.

Developed by Roger Garrett & Phil Backlund

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